

Testimony, 3/4/11

I am Bruce Clements, Past President of the Board of Directors of the Children's Law Center and a member of the panel of mediators in our Families in Transition program, which assists high conflict parents to create rational, loving ways of raising and protecting their children.

Whether you look at our direct representation of poor children, the vast majority of whom come to us at the invitation of Family Court judges, or our mediation service, or our roles in counseling and referral, our work is a first-line service to Connecticut families.

Our toll-free statewide hotline offers counsel and referrals to parents and children alike, and is often able to resolve family troubles before they can start draining the resources of police, the schools, and mental health facilities.

With a decade of experience representing young clients, our attorneys simplify and shorten Family Court processes, submitting thoughtful recommendations which, in ninety-nine percent of our cases, are reflected in the court's orders. As a result, our clients' families do not clog the system. The savings involved are a good deal larger than the amount of money you have invested in us. As evidence of this economy, of the cases we take on, 1) only ten percent end up in trials or hearings, and 2) where litigation does go forward, eighty-seven percent of our parents do not return with new litigation to further burden the system.

We thank you and your colleagues for the support you have given us in the past, and Governor Molloy for recognizing the value of our work and including our funding in his proposed budget, and ask that it be renewed in its full contracted amount of \$150,000 annually in order to continue our work with no reduction in service to the at risk children and families we serve.